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MILITARY

Senate Democrats offer compromise on ending ban

Spokeswoman says Clinton likely to issue decision today

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Democrats, trying to head off a congressional backlash that could weaken the week-old Clinton administration, offered a compromise Thursday for suspending the military's ban on homosexuals.

Sen. Sam Nunn, D-Ga., and Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, D-Maine, rushed the Senate proposal to the White House late Thursday and appeared close to an agreement with Clinton after a two-hour meeting.

"We made good progress," Mitchell told reporters.

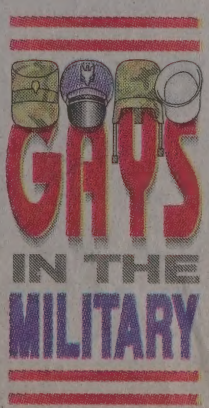
White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers said Clinton expected to make an announcement today.

She said that Clinton and Nunn, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the most influential opponent of lifting the gay ban, wanted to go over some final points overnight and would talk again today.

Meanwhile, in Los Angeles, U.S. District Judge Terry Hatter Jr. ruled it was unconstitutional to ban gays and lesbians from military service because of sexual orientation, saying that violates the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection to all citizens.

Myers said the decision had no bearing on Clinton's decision.

The congressional proposal closely tracks Clinton's stated plan for a six-month interim period during which the Pentagon would stop recruiters from asking about sexual preference and halt the ouster of homosexuals in uniform.



Sen. James Exon, D-Neb. and a senior member of the Armed Services Committee, said the Democrats worked out an agreement "to strike and eliminate the question of sexual preference for a six-month period."

In addition, the proposal calls for a "partial moratorium on proceeding with procedures to remove people from the service while it is further studied by the Chiefs of Staff and further studied in the hearings."

However, in a nod to the Pentagon, the compromise would also allow a commander to temporarily transfer a homosexual.

Whatever their sexual orientation, Clinton said Thursday, "Americans who are willing to conform to requirements of conduct in the military service, in my judgment, should be able to serve in the military."

Republicans pressed him not to take any immediate action and said they would try to stop him if he went ahead.

The president gave no indication of backing away from his ultimate goal, which aides have said would be reached in an order six months from now, of lifting the military's 50-year-old ban on homosexuals.

Back to CNN

He lost his bid for the White House, but **Pat Buchanan** still has a home at CNN, where he will return as co-host of "Crossfire." Buchanan, who took a leave of absence last year to challenge former President George Bush for the Republican nomination, will return to the show Monday. He will alternate with **John Sununu** in the conservative seat opposite **Michael Kinsley**. Sununu, the former chief of staff for Bush, joined CNN after Buchanan's departure.

Letterman's advice

David Letterman has a little advice on a late-night replacement for his soon-to-be former bosses at NBC. "I hear a lot of talk about this **Dana Carvey**. There's a boy we ought to look at," Letterman says in the Feb. 18 issue of Rolling Stone magazine. "But you know, I started watching 'The **Dennis Miller** Show' before it was canceled, and I thought, if you're looking for a guy to do a talk [illegible] would be a

James Bond, 007. *play "Evita."*

character in the CBS television show "Hearts Afire" is based on her life — and she's not happy about it. The character is Georgie Anne Lahti, who like Geyer is blond, wears bangs and is from Chicago, has interviewed loads of foreign leaders and has written a book about **Fidel Castro**. "They're exploiting my life,' Geyer said in an interview in Thursday's Washington Post. And, she's upset that the Lahti character, played by actress **Markie Post**, "has interviewed all the famous people in the world and she sleeps with absolutely everybody. I guess I just didn't have that much energy." The Post says Geyer is considering legal action.

Dalton gets back 007

Timothy Dalton, whose two-film run as James Bond was brought to a crashing halt by MGM's legal problems, is looking forward to playing 007 again. "Now that they've solved the lawsuits, that has cleared the path to doing another," he said in Los Angeles. Dalton says filming probably won't begin until next year.

Madonna too old

Madonna too old? That's what **Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber** said Thursday in Sydney, Australia. He said she isn't young enough to play the title role in the proposed film version of his "Evita." "She made noises that she wants to do it, but I don't think she's right for it," Lloyd Webber said. "Perhaps 10 years ago when she was younger, but I think she's a bit too old for it now, because (the real life) Evita died when she was 33." Lloyd Weber said he "quite likes" the 34-year-old pop star.

Gazette Telegraph news services

of nearly as much speculation as Warren Beatty's, finally has proof of his apehood.

His Bronx Zoo girlfriend, Patty Cake, is pregnant.

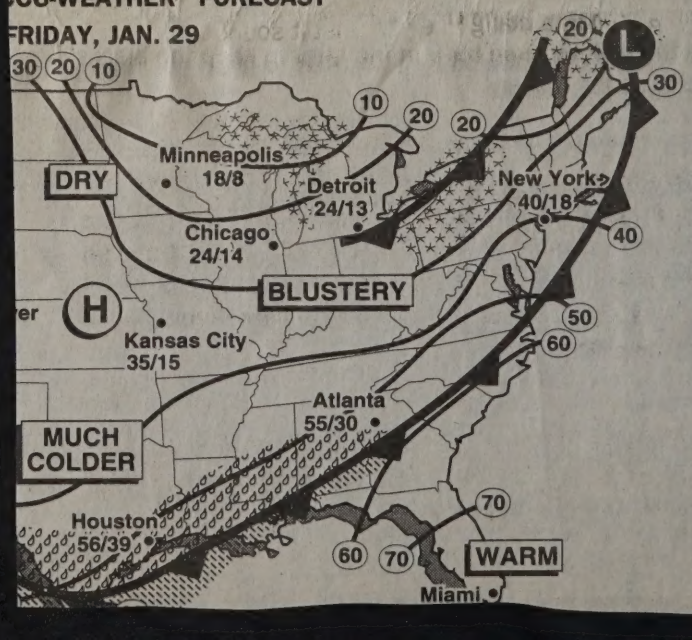
Elated zoo officials said Wednesday that two separate pregnancy tests on Patty Cake have come back positive.

And nobody doubts that Timmy is the father — zookeepers have been watching the 500-pound male lowland gorilla and Patty fooling around for months now.

Timmy, a 33-year-old silverback male, and Patty Cake were a blind date arranged by the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums, which designed the Species Survival Plan.

While the blessed event, scheduled for late summer or early fall, would be Timmy's first, having a baby gorilla would be no big deal to Patty Cake, who is already a mother of five.

Keno

THURSDAY NIGHT'S NUMBERS:

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